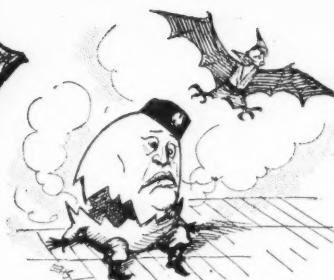




RUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCII No. 5264

January 21 1942

Charivaria

A SWEDISH woman lecturer who speaks three languages has just married a man who can speak six. This is said to be pretty good handicapping.

"It is unlikely that the Italians will render any assistance to Japan," says a writer. But it is a contingency that Japan will have to guard against.



Hot Stuff

"We know a lot about the fire of London from a peppy diary kept at the time."

Schoolboy's Essay.

Soldiers billeted in houses in Norway are now too nervous to go to the door. When they hear a knock they never know whether it is Opportunity or the Commandos.

GOEBBELS has been abusing Sweden and Switzerland. There is considerable relief in these countries. After all, he might have offered them Friendship Pacts.

"Germans," says a writer, "comfort themselves with thoughts of the discomfort war has brought to English towns." But they get no satisfaction from the straits of Dover.

HIMMLER is to establish his headquarters at the Eastern Front. This decision has proved very popular in Germany.

A weekly paper suggests that Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL should visit Moscow. A similar proposal was mooted in Germany some time ago regarding Herr HITLER.



War is to cost the U.S. £3,000,000 a day more than it costs Britain. All the war bargains of course were snapped up long ago.

"What will be the manner of HITLER's exit?" asks a writer. Quite possibly through a door marked *Putsch*.

A Host in Himself

"The Company has one or two fine old soldiers in C.S.M. Cooper, whom Major Bensted referred to as a 'Damn good Sergeant-Major.'"—*Kent Paper*.

"Spring will see the blooming of German victory into full flower," said GOERING recently. What part will he take? Queen of the May?



It is now claimed that we are building an unsinkable aircraft-carrier. This will come as a blow to GOEBBELS, who is all out for the sort that can be sunk continuously.

An American boxer, after winning a purse of \$500 in a recent fight, was presented at the ringside with an income-tax demand for \$510. This was the Inland Revenue's round by a narrow margin.

A Nazi writer complains of the unfriendly and truculent attitude of Italians in Rome. As he says, anybody would think they owned the place.

A person with no musical ear can have this corrected by hypnosis, according to an American doctor. We should welcome the opportunity of having our office-boy tuned.

Out There

I MAY be fairly gullible, but there are some things that I don't swallow without acute pain.

It is my sacred duty, I know, to point out that because our war in the Far East is going very badly it is all the fault of the "blimps out there." I know exactly what these blimps look like, and I know that nothing unpleasant would have happened to us if the gentlemen of Fleet Street had been rubber growers, Colonial administrators, mining engineers, bridge-builders, soldiers and a lot of other things that they haven't had time to be. Let us sum up the character and appearance of these Far Eastern blimps.

They all have long white moustaches.

They are all cocktail swillers.

They are all whisky guzzlers.

They all have "Meginot mentalities."

They are all complacent beyond belief.

They none of them understand the psychology of the native races.

I don't even have to depend on Fleet Street to tell me all this about all these blimps. In the hundred and one books that I have read about the Far East by globe-trotting authors for I don't know how many years, these people have figured again and again; and the authors having kindly helped them to swill their cocktails and guzzle their whisky—it was a sacrifice but they had to do it—have shaken their heads and gone home and written books about it all. Every time their host shook a cocktail they shook their heads and made a note on their shirt-cuffs, and shared the cocktail, and thought how horrible it all was. They knew how the blimps were going to pieces because of the insects and the climate and—well—a lot of other things. The author was sweating. The blimp was sweating too. Both were in pyjamas. "Shall I clap my hands for the boy to bring more drinks?" said the blimp.

"Well, if you must," said the author wincing, and wondering what was the nastiest thing he could say about the blimp when he got back.

Very often the author has hardly liked to pocket his royalties, because he felt so badly about the way the blimps were going on out there. Very often he wondered whether people at home ought to use motor-cars, considering that the rubber was produced by those fearful wallahs who didn't understand the psychology of the native races. But he steeled his heart and carried on.

Quite apart from all this, I have met blimps when they returned from out there. I remember one of them who used to smoke a Burma cheroot in bed at night, lay it on the ash-tray before he went to sleep, and go on with the stump when he was called in the morning. That showed you pretty well what things were like in the Far East, and I often

wondered what would happen if he went to sleep while he was still smoking. He had been in Persia a good deal, besides Burma and Malaya, and he used to tell me—it was fifteen years ago—that the name of Great Britain in Persia was rapidly becoming "mud." Persia thought a lot of the Germans, he said, because they spent so much more money on business enterprises than we did.

"How could they?" I used to ask.

"They borrow it from us, of course."

He also used to tell me about the Japanese. The funny thing was that he used to say we were all far too complacent about the Far East at home and didn't understand the psychology of the native races out there.

"Where are your long white moustaches?" I would say.

He hadn't got these, but he was quite willing to share my whisky with me. It was part of the White Man's Burden, he said, and it was his duty to help me along with it. But he never wrote books.

So much for the whisky. But what I can't swallow is the idea that the Government—and all the Governments—of the last fifteen years didn't know these things. They had read the papers written by the teetotalers of Fleet Street, they had read the novels of the ascetic globe-trotters, they had official records, they had spies. They too had met the blimps in person. They can hardly have been surprised when disasters came. It was surely their duty when war broke out, if not earlier, to send out at once to the Far East hundreds of men with short brown moustaches, who drank nothing but soda-water and lemonade, and were absolutely uncomplacent and rejoiced in damp heat and loved insects, and knew the psychology of the native races like the backs of their hands.

They should have been prepared for anything that the Japanese were likely to do out there, just as they were prepared for anything that the Germans might do in the Far West—Dunkirk, for instance, or incendiary bombs. They should have been as wise as the American journalist who has been censored in Singapore, merely for being as outspoken as he would have been if he had been cabling from Pearl Harbour or from Manila.

There is no excuse (in history) for being taken by surprise when an enemy attacks in sudden strength, and the Government of the Far West is no doubt ready to shoulder the responsibility like a clean-shaven, semi-teetotal man and not to allow the guzzling and swilling and ignorant blimps of Singapore to float above their heads as if they were barrage balloons to protect them from the dive-bombers of criticism.

Nor do I think they should try to console us for lack of news about the Far East (as they did one day last week) by pointing out that two suits of pyjamas were to be given to every member of the A.T.S. They might at least have made it one suit of pyjamas and a sarong.

In any case I feel that the wallahs with the long white moustaches must—like the people of London and Plymouth and Coventry and Birmingham—be rather brave.

EVOE.

TO REMIND YOU

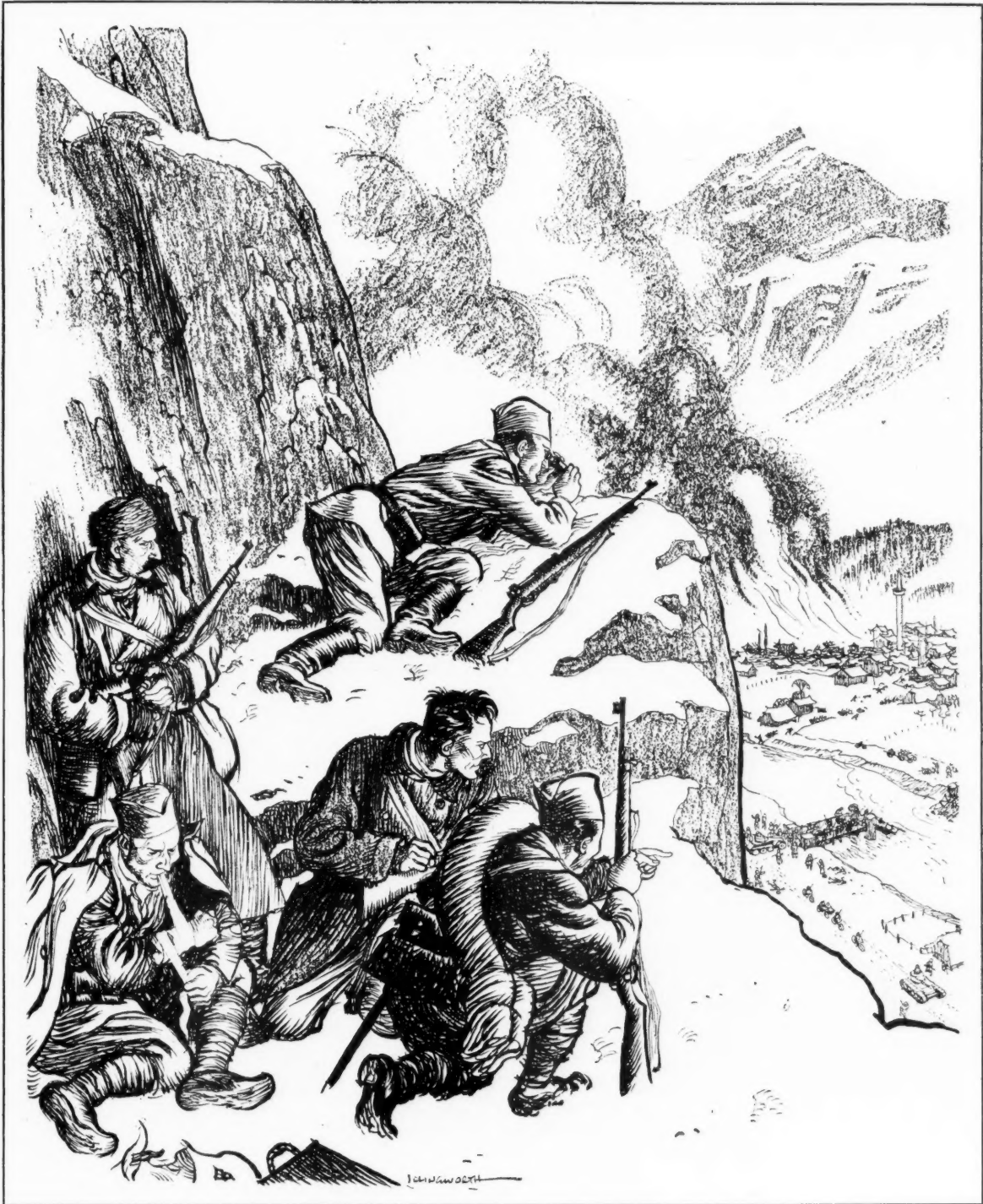
about the great Waste Paper Contest. It ends on January 31st. Make a big effort, put out all you can for collection, try to do better than the rest of the country, and by so doing help four great charities and

THE WAR EFFORT

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Sidelight

"When he was assistant stationmaster at Paddington, King George the Fifth often travelled with Queen Mary by ordinary train to Windsor, without any ceremony, and sometimes even unnoticed by the public."—*Evening Paper*.



FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS

[In admiration of the mountain guerilla army still fighting against Germany and Italy on Yugo-Slav soil.]



"I must say I now regret all the injury I've done to Russia in the past."

Making all Allowances

YOU know how, in looking for something you want, you come across something else which you did not know you had. Well, that's how it is with "Allowance Regs," the Book of Regulations which sets out all the extra money and things to which people in the Army may be entitled, and which they can try for. When looking up tips for porters, you discover, for example, that what you *can* claim is an allowance for fuel in lighthouses. . . . This seems so shortsighted a gesture on the part of the authorities that I cannot understand them giving publicity to it. The custom is that when something

particularly good is available to the serving subaltern everything is done to conceal his right to claim it, and the pay people are frightfully peeved if he finds out. One day someone will discover this unknown entitlement and take advantage of it by buying a lighthouse, and "living out" in it, on purpose to annoy.

There is another interesting allowance for "losses in cutting up meat." The book does not state how the clumsy cutter-up is to assess his deficiencies, but it is probably so much a finger, and a bit more for somebody else's thumb.

You can claim for "marking blankets," but in our unit this is done

free of charge by the simple expedient of walking over them at night. And you can claim for "browning arms."

This may be due to the theory that all handsome soldiers are slightly sunburned, or, in Army parlance, "browned off," but why they grant you the cost of browning the arms and not the waist-line, I do not know. Few experiences can be more embarrassing to the sensitive Service man than that of strolling down the bathing beach a pale creamy colour all over, with one startling exception—khaki arms. To set off the ensemble, I suppose, he would wear green kid gloves, and if he were a strawberry blond so much the

better. The idea behind this allowance can only be the hope that no officer will ever claim it at all.

Tips to porters are *not* recoverable. You can, however, claim something "if separated from your heavy baggage." Now is there a surer way of being separated from it for good than to abstain from tipping the man who is starting away with it on a truck? This really is the silliest method of giving you the money, under another name, too late.

You can charge up "candles for visiting stables at night." Nothing is said about any you require for looking for the cat under the bushes, and I think in any case that the picture of a weary cavalryman solemnly holding a candle in one hand while he grooms his horse with the other suggests tender-heartedness for a horse which may be frightened of the dark, carried to the *n*th degree. I am surprised they do not suggest a pillow which could be placed in the manger for the horse to rest his head on.

A man, by the way, is entitled to one-hundredth part of an ounce of pepper a day. How this is measured out I do not know. They could, of course, issue one ounce to one hundred men and let them scramble for it, like Westminster boys over the pancake, or they could give an ounce to one man to last one hundred days.

But the whole basis of "Allowance Regs" is that if a man is attached to your unit for only one day he is to be supplied with everything he is entitled to, or be given something in lieu. What are you to give in lieu of one-hundredth of an ounce of pepper, excepting perhaps a pinch of snuff?

Flicking through the rest of the 330 pages of "Allowance Regs" at greater speed, as the time at your disposal rushes by and you have still not found what you were looking for, you enjoy a kaleidoscopic parade of bargains such as allowances for "jumps for horses," but nothing about swings for canaries, or old tennis-balls for dogs. You can get something for "cleaning pharmacies," and one paragraph rather naïvely provides for "decorative articles in hospitals," as if this were not merely a question of an adequate supply of pretty nurses. Most difficult to justify is money for the "maintenance" of bagpipes. But there is nothing about how you can claim a cab-fare you incur by seeing a girl home from a dance, she being a subaltern in the A.T.S. due back on duty by reveille. All you can find is that Officers at the War Office are not supplied with chargers at the public expense, so that they definitely cannot

ride to work in the mornings and tie their horses to the railings. There are travelling expenses for recruiters on bicycles and corpses wanting carriages to themselves, but probably, like myself, you will close the book with a dissatisfied grunt at paragraph 675, which provides for "paper, waste, disposal of."

I should think so.

303 pages of allowances, and not one for me.

That is waste.

o o

Mrs. Blunderbags goes to Court.

AUCHTERBROSE,
SCOTLAND.

Friday.

To Mr Spout M P

DEAR SIR,—This is Mrs Dusty Mrs Pilkie and Mrs McSumph writing and it is with regards you asking for matters of general interest. Would therefore respectful inform you there was a visitation here of two smart blokes with big glowering specs on them like Americans which it turned out they was inspectors from the very head Food Office. And they done the Nosey Parker business poking about all the shops asking questions. Quite the wee gentlemen they say they was. But a day or two afterwards most of the shopkeepers got summonses for to go to the court. Such sensations. Mrs Blunderbags said I bet you the dirty dogs has been cheating us all the time. And she asked us to go to the court with her to hear the whole affair. Us women needs the help of the law says she against them bloodsuckers.

So we went with Maggie Blunderbags to the court to hear the shopkeepers getting condemned. The first was Mr McGilvery most pathetic standing there that respectable with his long beard between the two policemen. And the judge said how dare you my man expose your sausages with nothing on them for to show the people what they was made of. And poor Mr McGilvery was condemned for two pound. And Maggie Blunderbags said it is the jail he should have got.

Next it was Tam Footer the grocer for selling a tin of sardines for a penny too much to the two smart blokes. Such a sight he looked his dreary face and his bald head and his whole body looking melancholy. This is the one says Mrs Blunderbags that I got the hair in his butter. And when the judge asked Tam what about it Tam says

that soft like you see My Lord I was not aware them two was detectives. The dirty cheat says Mrs Blunderbags I hope he gets ten years. But the judge just looked at Tam for a while over his specs like he was something at the Zoo and then he said two pound or ten days.

Well this was when Mrs Blunderbags got right off the deep end. She yells out it is penal servitude the man needs. The judge took off his specs and glowered at her. Up comes a policeman. Missis says he another word out of you and it is in the cells you will be. You are not in a washing house now says he.

Well after that Mr Spout M P we lost all pleasure of hearing the shopkeepers getting condemned with Maggie Blunderbags keeping whispering to us out of the corner of her mouth. When Wullie Flesh had to pay-a pound for something about his oxtail says she it is the cat with nine tails he should get. And the things she said about the judge was terrible. About him being an old dodderer in a wig and siding with the shopkeepers. We felt like we was sitting on pins and needles.

And coming home in the last bus in the blackout she gets into a argy bargy with a fat man for him saying the judge was the best judge. Of course says she to the fat man it is easy seen the way you stick up for the shopkeepers sitting there all swelled up with unlawful rations Mr Plum Pudding says she.

Then when we gets off the bus we meets Angus the policeman. Just at Mrs Blunderbags house it was. Well well says Maggie sarcastic here is our brave policeman keeping well out of the way to give the poor shopkeepers a fair chance to carry on with their cheating. Says Angus you went and left your scullery blind up. Maggie gives a toss of her head and says she I have been busy all day attending the court. Well says Angus you will know the road to it now. Because says he you will have to go back again. Because says he you left the light on as well as the blind up and it is blazing away into the blackout as far as Berlin.

Do you know Mr Spout M P Maggie Blunderbags walked right into the house without a word and banged the door in our faces. And us three just said it all goes to show.

With kindest regards Mr Spout M P hoping this will be of general interest for you

Yours most respectful
MARTHA DUSTY (Mrs)
MARY PILKIE (Mrs)
HELEN MCSUMPH (Mrs)
D.

At the Pictures

MIXTURES

THE message of *Sullivan's Travels* (Director: PRESTON STURGES) is apparently that the most—indeed the only—worth-while aim for an artist of any kind, particularly a film-director, is to arouse simple, strong, temporary emotions in which the miserable may forget their woe.

It's a point of view, but it certainly leaves a lot out. The impression given by the film, however, is that it has got practically everything in; there can seldom have been a work more miscellaneous. Satire, slapstick, picaresque romance, attempted murder, violent death, robbery, the chain gang are all stirred up together in this piece—which as I pointed out above even has a Message as well. Each of its constituent parts is well done: the farce of the car-chase near the beginning is overpoweringly funny, the acid wisecracks about Hollywood matters have never been more effectively put over, the brutality of the chain-gang boss is scarifying. The fact remains that all these things do not belong in the same film. Absorbing it undoubtedly is, and as entertainment very efficient indeed; but the question is whether you consider superficial entertainment to be everything. Mr. STURGES' Message, of course, is that you should.

The burly good-nature of JOEL MCCREA does not perhaps quite fit the part of a Hollywood director, tired of making musical farces, who sets out to experience misery and want before doing a film about them; but so much of the rest of this work doesn't fit, either, that the point is hardly worth mentioning. VERONICA LAKE was a tragic blonde last time we saw her; this time she is a lightly romantic one, but with no more sense.

In *Lydia* (Director: JULIEN DUVIVIER), an account of a woman's life, or the more dramatic moments of it, the episodes are linked by



[Sullivan's Travels]

FILM DIRECTOR, WITH GIRL, SEEKS LIFE
IN THE RAW

John L. Sullivan JOEL MCCREA
The Girl VERONICA LAKE



[Lydia]

MORE EYE-WORK

Granny EDNA MAY OLIVER
Michael JOSEPH COTTEN

direct narrative: the old lady tells her story at one of those backward-looking parties so popular in fiction, at which the *dramatis personæ* appear twenty (or whatever it is) years after, and nod and beck and wreath infinitely wise smiles over their youthful follies. It's a convention I personally find wearisome, and although this film has some excellent visual moments (Camera: LEE GARMES) it rather bored me. There are hints of *Rebecca*, and more than hints of Mr. DUVIVIER's own *Un Carnet de Bal*, but it isn't in the same street as that. It takes the girl too seriously, I think, except for that bit (borrowed from *Un Carnet de Bal*) about the imperfectly recollected ballroom: it is too solemnly romantic. And when we hear the old lady's own words between the episodes, they are all too often the clichés of the romantic novel.

Nevertheless it is a good part for MERLE OBERON, and she is better, I think, than ever before. The men's parts are altogether subsidiary: they merely circulate round the star. EDNA MAY OLIVER is a *Granny* full of strange oaths.

As for *The Chocolate Soldier* (Director: ROY DEL RUTH), no wonder the line of credit-titles at the beginning seems to stretch out to the crack of doom. I didn't notice Mr. SHAW's name, but even that may have been there; though there is now almost no excuse for it. For this film is essentially FERENC MOLNAR's play *The Guardsman* (which was such a good picture when the LUNTS made it), padded out and blown up and slowed down and complicated by bits of the title operetta in order that NELSON EDDY and RISE STEVENS may have something to sing. Well, it has moments, but it's another queer mixture—and a very, very slow one. I believe, though, that lack of pace never worries the considerable public for pictures of this kind, who go to them chiefly for the sake of being able to lie back and revel in long, rich, fruity, sustained vocal top notes.

R. M.

Commission

SAPPER Symphon is a commission candidate, but unlike most commission candidates, who stay with us for a short while and then are suddenly snatched away to an O.C.T.U., he lingers on and on as a Sapper, so that his commission candidature has become a standing joke in the Company, like Driver Bullen's porridge and Sergeant Green's piano. Distasteful tasks are put off with the phrase "I will do it when Symphon gets his commission," much as one might say "I will do it when pigs fly," though probably by this time many pigs have flown, and Symphon is still no nearer his commission.

It is not that he has been forgotten, because he is constantly appearing before Boards in all parts of the country. He has acquired such a taste for Boards that he gets quite melancholy if more than a few weeks pass between one and the next.

"It is three weeks since I was at Middlechester for the R.A.S.C. Board," he says indignantly. "Surely it is time I was interviewed again. Somewhere in the Home Counties would suit me, because my sister in Surrey has a new baby that she wishes me to see."

His account of what happens at these Boards is vague and unsatisfactory. "I was put through an intelligence test," he said after the last but one, "and then I waited a long time in a little cold room with a sergeant who told some of the most remarkable ghost stories I have ever heard; and then suddenly they called out 'Sapper Symphon,' and I straightened my cap and shouted 'Sir,' very loud and marched through what I thought was the door to the Board Room, but it turned out to be a wash-place, and it had a patent lock that jammed. I could hear them yelling out 'Sapper Symphon, Sapper Symphon, Sapper Symphon,' and I got into such a panic that when I was eventually released and appeared in front of the Board I was not at my best. The head man on the Board, a Colonel or something similar, asked me if I had any experience of dealing with the wholesale grocery trade. I said that I had not, but that I could speak a little Spanish. Why I should introduce the Spanish motif I do not know. It just came out. The Colonel evidently thought I was trying to be funny, and said he did not think I was suitable for the R.A.S.C., which is a very serious corps."

For his most recent Board, however, Symphon was fully prepared. Warned



Fongasee

"Isn't it wonderful to think, George, that the axis of an elongated shot, or shell, fired from a rifled gun, would move parallel to itself only if in a vacuum, but that in air the couple due to the sidelong motion tends to place the axis at right angles to the tangent of the trajectory, and causes the axis to precess about the tangent, although the frictional drag damps the nutation so that the axis follows the tangent very closely."

by his failure with the R.A.S.C., he practised an expression of deep melancholy, and a voice that can only be described as sepulchral. The Board asked him what he thought of the war situation generally, and he replied non-committally. His voice and manner, however, invested his simple answer with a significance he had not intended, and the Board told him that in their

opinion his defeatist attitude made him an unsuitable candidate.

As Symphon says, it is all very difficult. But the delay has its advantages: if there is another war after this one, he says, his experience of Boards will give him an advantage over the new generation, and he may get a commission reasonably early in the campaign.



"I want three volunteers."

Cherchez la Femme.

"I'VE been meaning to tell you, I met someone the other day—but it isn't really much use my telling you."

"Why not?"

"Well—you'll think it extraordinary—and she was so frightfully anxious to hear about you, and I know her perfectly well, but at the minute—only just at the minute—I can't remember her name."

"It'll come back to you. Is it someone who knows me?"

"Oh, no, she doesn't know you at all. But she's got some friends who know you terribly well. I think they've stayed with you."

"Really? Who are they?"

"Well, I'm afraid you'll think me idiotic, but I simply *can't* remember. I only know that when I heard their name—she said it at *least* fifty times—I felt sure I'd never heard you speak of them. I told her that if they'd really stayed with you I felt sure I should have heard you mention them."

"Couldn't you possibly remember who they are?"

"I don't think so. I'm sure you think I'm half-witted. I suppose it couldn't be Marshall, by any chance?"

"I don't think I know anybody called Marshall."

"Or Freshwater?"

"No."

"Well, really, there isn't any special reason why it should be either. I only just thought it might be, you know."

"I quite understand. And you still can't remember what your friend's name is?"

"She isn't exactly a friend of mine. I just meet her very often at my club. But I know her name as well as I do my own. Better, really."

"What does she look like?"

"Oh, nothing, you know. She's very like everybody else, really. Just a face, and so on. But anyway, she knows she's never seen you, or you her. It's just that she knows these people who've stayed with you—Hopkins, or whatever they're called, only of course it *isn't* Hopkins—so frightfully well. And there was another thing too."

"Not anything to make it more difficult, I hope?"

"I'm not sure. She, this Miss—I practically had it then on the tip of my tongue, but it went again before it came—well, she knows you're staying here with Hazel and she was most terribly interested."

"Oh, well, if she knows Hazel we can get at her name easily. I'll ask her to—"

"No, no, no! She doesn't know Hazel at all. But she knows a man who *is* a friend of Hazel's, and she

feels sure Hazel could give her his address."

"Can you—I hope you won't mind my asking you this—but can you remember his name?"

"John."

"Is that all?"

"Well, I think that's all that Miss—Heavens! how well I know her name!—that she actually *said*. If she did say anything more, I didn't take it in. You know how one sometimes doesn't. Still, Hazel will probably know who John is."

"I'll ask her when she comes in, but of course it *would* be easier if we could identify any of them."

"I know, I know. Well, I'm sure I'll remember that woman's name the very moment I leave here, and I'll ring you up and tell you what it is..."

* * * * *

"Look here, I'm frightfully sorry it's so late. I hope you weren't in bed—but I've got her name for you. I remembered it almost as I left your doorstep. I suddenly said to myself: 'LARKINS!' but I wouldn't come back and tell you at once, because I suddenly thought it might be Parkins. But it was all right. I found out at the club. Larkins. I haven't yet got hold of her to ask her about those people who stayed with you, because she's out, but I'm lying in wait in the hall and I can ring you up again later... Or perhaps to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow, I think. I've got rather a headache."

"Have you? What bad luck! I wonder why you should have got a headache..."

E. M. D.

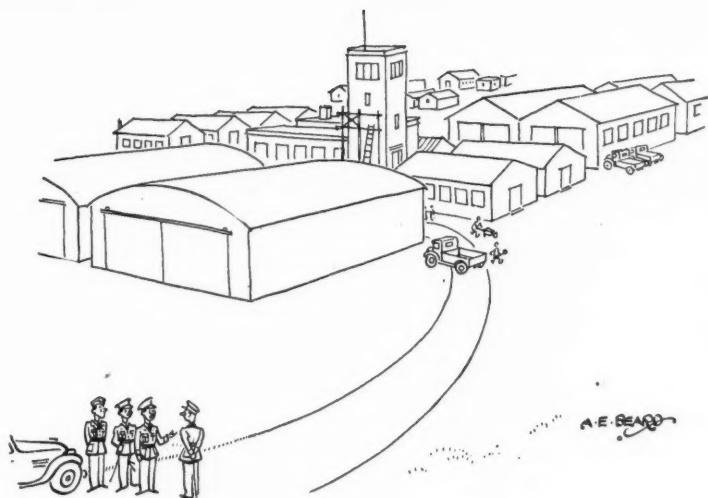
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I Met Him in the Canteen.

SOMETIMES, if we shout loudly enough at the little boy who sits on the steps of the armoury, we manage to buy a paper. It is not always the paper we used to buy in civilian life, but we are grateful to the little boy for coming and sitting on the steps in the dark. He is a link with the world we used to know.

I bought a paper this morning and took it into the N.A.A.F.I., which opens for half an hour for the benefit of those soldiers whose palates, ruined by years of indulgence, have not yet become accustomed to the simple Service breakfast; whose appetites need to be assuaged with buns, rock and Chelsea, or rolls, sausage.

Glancing round as I took a seat near



"What we want now is something really DISTINCTIVE in the way of camouflage."

the radiator—from habit this, and not because the radiator was on at this hour—I saw that there were only a few customers. Of these, though they could not have left their blankets an hour before, the majority were asleep, cups and saucers at their elbows. A fatigue party, in its shirt-sleeves, was leaning on its brooms.

I read the headlines. As I did so I became aware that the cigarette which I held elegantly in my left hand was being gently agitated by some mysterious agency.

"Ta," said a voice behind me and, turning in my chair, I saw him, drawing furiously at half an inch of yellowed paper. A few strands of tobacco blazed briefly at the end.

"That's all right," I said, "do not on any account trouble to ask. Any time you happen to be passing and need a light, please take one. Do not be in the least concerned at having bent my cigarette into the shape of a fish-hook."

It was first thing in the morning, remember, and I had shaved in cold water.

"Ta," said he.

I returned to my headlines. But I could not concentrate. I knew I was not reading those headlines alone. A shadow was across the page. Smoke was being blown down my neck.

Deliberately I folded the paper up and handed it backwards. It was taken from me at once.

"Ta," he said again.

"Not at all," I said, and he took a chair opposite to me and spread out my paper on the table, settling himself.

He was a slow and careful reader. I could see him spelling out the headlines to himself, not intending to be

misled as to their purport. He looked up once or twice, having placed a second tattered fragment between his lips, to see if I was smoking. Finally, half-way through the astrology column on page two, he made a definite advance to me. He half-rose and thrust his cigarette-end under my nose.

I ignored this, but got up presently and went to the counter, asking for a pennyworth of tea in my enamel mug.

"One," said the girl, looking over my head.

"And I see you have some matches," I said, courteously. "May I have a box, please?"

"Two and a half," said the girl, polishing a fingernail absently on the top of a sausage-roll.

When I got back he was sitting in my chair, just beginning on the page of strip cartoons.

"They have some matches this morning," I said, putting down my purchases on the table.

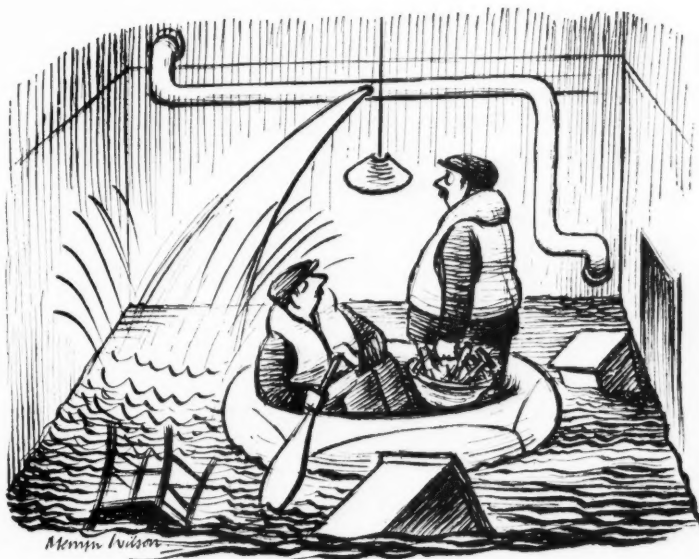
"Ah?" he said. "Ta." And he took up my matches and put them in his pocket.

I thought at first of trying to explain. Instead I said, "One and a half."

He got up, went through his pockets systematically and eventually found a halfpenny. This he threw down in front of me. Then, seeing the demand note in my eyes, he folded up my paper and threw that down in front of me too.

"It's to-day's," he said, forestalling any objection.

"Ta," I said, watching him go.



The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"SOMEONE must be hoarding disgustingly, Mabel, I could only get ONE packet at each of the shops I went to!"

Marching Song of the Monkey Men

(A note on the cartoon in last week's Punch.)

HERE we go in a mental swoon,
Raising a storm to reach the moon.
Don't you envy our forceful bands?
Don't you long for prehensile hands?
Wouldn't you cheerfully change your shape
Into the form of the tutored ape?
Now you're jealous, but—never mind;
Only the free folk lag behind.

Here we travel the teeming East,
Hoping and hoping to change the beast,
Preaching an Order entirely new,
All completed and ready to view—
Something noble and wise and good:
Why are our words misunderstood?
Some get broken, but—never mind;
Only the free folk lag behind.

All the phrases we ever took
Out of the Nazi bunkum-book,
Flung together in mindless passion—
Goebbel them over in Fuehrer fashion:
Plutocrats! Lebensraum! . . . Rising sons,
Now you are talking just like Huns!
Let's pretend we have—made a find—
Proofs of treachery long designed.
That is a touch of the master-mind. . . .

Then let's be Herrenvolk and smother earth in
smoke,
And very high the dirt will fly, since apes have
wings.
By the mouthings of a State that can only
imitate,
Be sure, be sure we're bound to meet familiar things!



HEIL HIMMLER!

"All your fur coats for the frozen troops, good! Now, please, your bowler hats for the liquidated generals."

The Brain-Stormers

(With apologies to everybody)

III

CHAIRMAN: Well, here we are again: and all the world is waiting for us. The first question comes from Mrs. Fairfield, of Hockley-in-the-Hole. She writes: "*There is all this talk about the Russian winter. Moscow is the same latitude as Edinburgh. Why is it so much colder at Moscow?*" Bubble?

Commander Bubble: Well, of course, the answer's simple, isn't it? It's the Gulf Stream.

Professor Goad: I have never really believed in the Gulf Stream.

Commander Bubble: Well, I dunno. There you are. You can only look at the facts. Undoubtedly you have this warm current coming across from the Gulf of Mexico. First of all, of course, it flows parallel to the North American coast; and then, of course, it's very warm indeed. I well remember, in one ship, if we wanted hot water, we used to lower a kettle over the side—

Mrs. Moon: But excuse me, Commander, why did you want hot seawater?

Commander Bubble: Well, to take stains out of the anchor and that sort of thing. I remember one captain I was under, he always used to wash the Ensign in the Gulf Stream. Some say that's a bad thing, because the colours may run: but I don't remember having an experience of that kind.

Chairman: I think it's a matter of history that the White Ensign never runs.

Commander Bubble: Ha! Well, that's true enough, in a sense. Ha! Well, then, of course, when it reaches the belt of sou'-westerly winds, the Gulf Stream turns four points to starboard and heads across the Atlantic.

Professor Goad: Why does it do that?

Commander Bubble: Well, I suppose it's the wind-effect. At least, that's what I've always thought. I mean, with the prevailing wind sou'-west, naturally the Gulf Stream tends to travel nor'-east—or thereabouts. It slackens speed now, and they call it the North Atlantic Drift. But it's still warm, and extremely salt. I well remember one trip, when I had a bad throat, I used to gargle in the Gulf Stream every night of my life. Did me a lot of good too. And, of course, it's extremely blue. That's another thing. Well, then it goes on, you

see, and, as the school-books say, it "washes" the shores of—

Chairman: "Gargles," perhaps? (Laughter.)

Commander Bubble: —of our islands and Western Europe. That's why it's not so cold in Edinburgh or Newcastle as it is in Moscow. And, of course, it goes much farther than that. It goes up to Northern Scandinavia. Look at Norway. Norway's ports are open all the winter, far above the Arctic Circle. But the Swedes, in the Baltic, are frozen up. Look at us. Why is it that we're able to do what we're able to do all the year round, growing crops and that sort of thing, when over in Labrador, no farther north than us, there's nothing but frozen tundra—?

Professor Goad: What?

Commander Bubble: Tundra. Well, it's the Gulf Stream. Well, it isn't the Gulf Stream, really: because, of course, a sea current by itself would do nothing but heat the air above it. It's the prevailing south-westerly winds that bring the warm air over the land. And all this, I suppose, is what causes the British character.

Chairman: Thank you, Bubble. I don't suppose anyone has anything to add to that masterly exposition. The next question— Oh, Goad? Yes?

Professor Goad: May I ask Bubble a question? Suppose that some evil-disposed person opened all the locks

in the Panama Canal and let the Gulf Stream out into the Pacific Ocean? What would be the effect on the British Isles?

Commander Bubble: Well, of course, the answer is—I don't think it would happen. I mean, of course, you might open all the locks, but I don't think the Gulf Stream would run away, as if you'd pulled the plug of a bath. After all, the Gulf Stream is a pretty big thing—

Professor Goad: I don't press the question very seriously; but I remember in my youth a certain governess used to press my reluctant nose to so-called "physical" maps of the world in which the ocean currents were represented by innumerable little arrows—the Gulf Stream, the cold current that came down from the north by Labrador—and so on. They bored me, rather: and I always had a particular detestation for the Gulf Stream. It is not too much to say that I resented the Gulf Stream. In my childish but patriotic mind I resented what seemed to me, from all I was told, the quite disproportionate part which had been played in our history by this overweening current. Well, one day, studiously examining those odious little arrows, I noticed that the original impetus seemed to come from the east—that is, from the West Coast of Africa.

Commander Bubble: That's perfectly true. The north-east trades bring it over. I well remember, I once drifted in a barge all the way from Africa to the Gulf of Mexico, round the Gulf of Mexico, past Florida, and across to Bristol by the Gulf Stream.

Professor Goad: Did you? Well, there were those little arrows heading hurriedly for the Panama Canal, or thereabouts. And every geography lesson after that I used to say to myself: "What fun it would be to open all the locks and let all the arrows rush through into the Pacific!" But you don't think that's practicable, Bubble?

Commander Bubble: I doubt if you'll get rid of the Gulf Stream as easily as that, Goad.

Professor Goad: A pity. But, if I could—and this is the real point of my question—what do you say would be the effect upon these islands?

Commander Bubble: Well, I certainly think it would make all the difference in the world. I mean, we should be like Labrador. The whole place would be





"That's the best I can do for to-night, Sir—after all, you must remember there's a Crusade on."

covered with snow. Glaciers would form in the valleys. We couldn't grow crops. The Thames would be frozen half the year. I don't know, but I imagine we should have Polar bears. We should live in huts. Undoubtedly our whole character would alter—

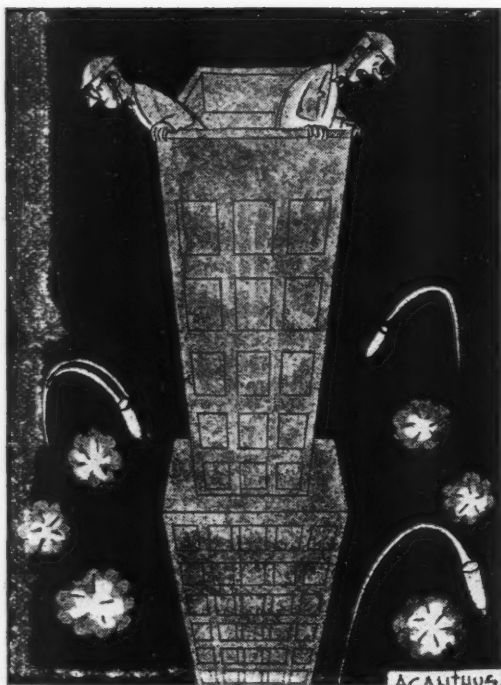
Professor Goad: That's what I resent. As I said earlier, I never really believed in the Gulf Stream. That is—I believed in the existence of this current, as I believe in the existence of the Thames; but not in the legend that England's—I beg your pardon, Britain's prosperity and greatness was founded on nothing but a geographical accident. Everything that Bubble has said has only increased my suspicion on both points. We are now told, for example, that it is not, after all, a stretch of warm water that has made our character and history, but the prevalence of south-westerly winds. No evidence, however, has been produced to suggest that the same genial wind, coming from the same warm region of the American continent, would not continue to benefit our

climate and crops if this absurd current were diverted elsewhere. But far more serious, to my mind, is the suggestion, the insulting suggestion, that the British character is entirely the product

of warm water and wind. After all, the proudest pages of our history were written in very different climatic conditions from our own, in the frozen Arctic Circle, in the dust of the desert, in tropical heat. After all, the Australians, the Canadians, who dwell in very different climates, are still as British as we are, and perhaps more brave. If the Gulf Stream were really the main shot in our locker, so to speak, we should never have discovered either the South Pole, or the Equator. No. Believing, as I do, in the superiority of mind to matter—and especially the British mind—I must hold that we owe nothing of our greatness to any stream, current, wind or draught; that there is some inborn power or virtue in our people which would make us prevail and prosper, whatever the temperature, wherever the wind. And if Mrs. What's-her-name is still waiting to hear *my* answer to the question: "Why is it so much colder in Moscow than it is in Edinburgh or Hull?" my answer is that the British people arrange things better. A. P. H.

WORLD WAR

THE British Navy is now facing danger in most of the seas of the world. Remember, it is to the sacrifices of these sailors that you owe many of the comforts of civilized life which you still enjoy. In return, will you not contribute to the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND? A gift to this Fund enables you to express your gratitude in tangible form. You owe it to our sailors to see that they are well provided with extra comforts this winter. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.



"Swell barrage to-night, Hank!"

The Night Goods

AT one A.M. the Night Goods goes
From Anston Hill, the marshalling yard,
With dragon-snortings through her nose.

The driver, fireman, and guard
Last Monday worked the midnight link—
An hour nearer peep o' day
They start. The couplings crash and jar;
Young Herbert plies his fire-bar,
The driver sings out: "Right away!"
While molten light, with glare and blink,
Bursts from the fire-hole, to wink
On jumping water-gauge, brass wheel,
The shovel's crimson-gleaming steel,
Which now begins its rhythmic clink
As Herbert bends his lithe young back
And steadily, with practised swing,
Shoots in the fiery-lacquered black
Rich food his goddess to appease:
Acolyte to the hierophant,
And server of burnt offering.

The 0-8-0 begins to chant
The song all working engines sing:

"More PRESS-shure, PLEASE,
More Press-shure, please!"

The driver peers into the night,
And from a firefly-tangle picks
Their own far emerald-point of light.

"The backboard's off!" the driver cries.
Young Herbert stops to mop his brow
And in his turn to scrutinize
The night's abyss.

"That's Be-TTER, now,
That's BETT-er, now!"

The 0-8-0
Contented sings, and breasts the slope,
And screams at prisoned echoes caught
Asleep in tunnels, whence they grope
In blind bat-panic for escape
From this devouring dragon-shape
Which tosses them behind, and snores
Through cuttings black as Styx, and roars
Across a bridge.

"More PRESS-shure, PLEASE!"

The driver gently checks her speed,
For, Argus though two-eyed, he sees
The distant board, a ruby spark
Minute as, in the heavens, is Mars:
Red Danger burning in the dark
Is there, Disaster's dormant seed
Which flowers into redder stars.

Through the long, long immensity
Of Night and Time's commingled flow
With unrelaxed intensity
Of ceaseless vigilance they go
Into a strange sweet country which,
When the false dawn has shot its bolt,
Emerges, innocent as a dream:
Embankment, meadow, daybright stream,
Hedgerow and hamlet, church and holt,
Dawn-naked tree and glittering ditch.

Now, racing them, a startled colt
Rears up; or cattle raise their heads
To watch, as small boys might, each wagon
Clank by.

Increasing, daylight spreads—
The sun winks at the green-flanked dragon:
Into the day the Night Goods runs
Bound North, with steel to make the guns.

R. C. S.

Adastral Bodies

Clothes and the Airman

OUR uniforms caused us some anxiety in the early days. We had no complaints against the clothes themselves, and some of us discovered with gratification that our hats ("head-dresses," officially) exactly covered our balding patches. No, our anxiety was due to remarks made by airmen of longer standing than ourselves—men who were perhaps advanced as far as their fifth week of training. They said that we looked "sproggy," and even hailed us as "sprogs" as we went by.

We wondered how long it would take the wind and weather of Muddington-on-Sea to reduce us to the venerable unsproggy which distinguished the greenish-blue figure of, for example, our own Corporal Baker.

It took less time than any of us had dared to hope. Before long, glancing hopefully under our lapels or at the underside of our belts, we were heartened to see that these pieces of unexposed material were of a surprisingly dark



"I wish I could think when I bought it."

blue. Our daily activities also did their best for us by taking the creases out of our trousers and causing other creases to appear across the toes of our boots; and the blows which we rained upon our hats to keep them in place during strenuous bouts of marking time soon began to spread them flatly over our heads and to impose upon them a certain individuality. When matters reached this stage we were happy men. We were no longer sproggy. We hoped our critics would notice and approve.

Actually it was Sergeant Llewellyn who noticed it—and without offering one word of approval. It was Sergeant Llewellyn's business to look after our entire Flight. His practice was to arrive without warning and subject us to terrible ordeals of drill and invective, and it was upon the very day that we had unanimously pronounced the devil of sproggy to be finally exorcised that it occurred to him to hold a dress inspection.

When he had scrutinized the boot-heels of the very last man he sprang up on to the narrow sea-wall, the pounding sea below him, and behind him the weed-slippery crags and the long plunge to the beach. We awaited his verdict calmly. We looked like airmen, and we knew it.

The sergeant paced up and down a little, no doubt deciding in what terms to couch his expressions of congratulations, sensing perhaps that for once none of us was praying for him to miss his footing and disappear backwards. At last he spoke.

"You—" he began, and choked a little—"you—SLUTS!"

After that he found his words more easily, and every man grew pale. . . .

Many of us went without our teas that night. We were fighting to get at the billet's solitary flat-iron. We stood in queues, our trousers over our arms, tugging at our head-dresses, pulling at the pocket-flaps which had only that morning delighted us by tending to curl like rose-leaves.

We were late to bed. And one there was, Second-Class Aircraftman Gunthorpe (whose rôle in civilian life had been Something in Gents' Outfitting), who sat by a candle with needle and thread until the dawn's grey fingers began to pluck at the black-out curtains.

Second-Class Aircraftman Gunthorpe was not without his reward. When we gathered at breakfast next morning, it was plain that he was the smartest of us all. The creases of his trousers were like bayonets' edges; his pocket-flaps lay snug against his breast; there was a slenderness about his waist and a becoming squareness about his shoulders. And when he donned his head-dress to accompany us on parade, exclamations of admiration escaped us for the noble uprightness with which it stood upon his head. The rest of us were neat, clean—sproggy, indeed, but Second-Class Aircraftman Gunthorpe was immaculate. He might almost have been mistaken for an officer.

Sergeant Llewellyn awaited us, dapper, fierce, hyper-critical. But when at last he sprang again on to the sea-wall it was not to lash us with words. He said gently that we would do; and turning an appraising eye upon Second-Class Aircraftman Gunthorpe, splendid in the front rank, he invited him to take two paces forward and to turn about. This brought the dandy of the squad face to face with the rest of us. We did not grudge him his moment of glory.

"I want you to look at this man," said the Sergeant. "I want you to look at him, because if any of you ever come on parade looking like he looks, you're going where he's going—on a charge!"

Beau Gunthorpe turned white, red, and white again.

"This man," continued the voice from the sea-wall, its inflexion rising, "will be charged with making unauthorized alterations in the uniform of the Royal Air Force. He has put press-studs on his pocket-flaps; he has inserted pads or blocks in his tunic shoulders; he has removed a V-piece of material from the back of his tunic; he has inserted a V-piece of material in his trouser bottoms; he has *sewn in* his creases; he has moved two of his tunic buttons, replacing one of them upside-down; he has shortened his tunic belt, causing it to buckle in the end instead of the middle hole. Lastly, he has stitched up the top of his head-dress with black cotton. Corporal Baker, *put this man on a charge!*"

And as Sergeant Llewellyn bicycled away, as the Corporal sadly took out his notebook, as Second-Class Aircraftman Gunthorpe tottered to his place, a great whistling sigh arose from the rest of us. For which one of us, given the criminal's ingenuity, perseverance and skill, might not at that moment have stood in similar peril of damnation for the duration . . . ?



His Hero

HE was always a diverting companion, whether at the 'Varsity Match, where he claims to know everyone, or at the less exclusive night-clubs where everyone claims to know him, and I thought when I saw him on leave that Jake had been improved by service, and that his Commanding Officer had done a fine job. I was mistaken.

This Commanding Officer had not been with the Battalion a fortnight, it appears, before the Adjutant saw Jake in private and said the Commanding Officer considered his mode of marching at the head of his men could be improved upon. "In fact," said the Adjutant, "he thinks you look like an old camel."

Jake pointed out that as he was an old rowing man and his Sam Browne was not his own, it was difficult not to. "Besides," he protested, "the old man walks just the same way." "Maybe," replied the Adjutant; "but he is the Commanding Officer." Jake could make only one answer: "Quite."

Jake said he would tell me some of the things his Commanding Officer did, because they were just the things I would love to do if I were C.O. He was accustomed to put through, it seems, important phone calls to War Office on hush-hush matters, and wave everybody out of the room before he began to speak. Then he would raise his voice till every clerk in the building could hear him telling some top-notch at the War House that he damned well would not put up with it.

This same C.O. met some dreadful woman at a dance and found she was married to one of his officers. So he asked the Adjutant which one, and when the Adjutant told him, he said "He must go." The fellow was posted in twenty-seven minutes by A.G.8, which was apparently a record.

"And I can tell you this for an absolute fact," said Jake. "He had a Company-Sergeant-Major on the mat and went at him in such a way that everyone thought the C.S.M. would pick up a chair with both hands and go crackers. But no, the fellow just wafted outside; there was a clatter and a thump, and somebody poked his nose round the door in a very confidential way and said 'He has fainted.'"

"In mess," continued Jake, "he does all the talking and nobody has ever looked bored yet, because if ever they even feel like looking bored he talks about them. If you walked into our barracks you would know by instinct whether the C.O. were in because, if

he were, everyone would be working like blazes and grinning through the sweat. But if he were out they would simply look browned off. The C.O. has the capacity for getting the most out of everyone whilst doing the least himself. And I am flattered to say he sometimes gets me to go with him to a Turkish Bath, not only because he thinks I need it, but because he likes companionship, which in a Turkish Bath takes, I consider, a very curious form. You start off in the steam cabinets, facing one another from about two feet distance, with only your necks sticking out of the hole at the top, and these are wrapped round with towels so it looks as if you had been guillotined and your bodies had gone away in the cart. From my point of view it is embarrassing to be facing the C.O. under these conditions, because you can't stand to attention when he speaks to you; you can't so much as salute if he goes. There you sit, armless, peering into one another's faces; and if I feel a bit of an ass, I console myself with this thought—'Damn it, the old man looks just the same.' It is at that point," concluded Jake, "that I remember that unanswerable line of the Adjutant's: 'Maybe; but he is the Commanding Officer.'"

"He must be a great man," I said.

"He is, and this is the really satisfying point," said Jake: "say what you like, you can't get away from the fact that with the one exception that he is the Commanding Officer, we two are exactly alike."

o o

Arma Senemque

FOR twenty-three years I have been disembodied. That alone should not be a serious worry to a Scotsman; for one of his own national writers declares that in any case there is no satisfactory evidence of the existence of flesh-and-blood men, yet is careful to add, "but o' the existence o' ghosts and fairies I never heard before that the proof was counted defective. I've seen scores o' them, baith drunk and sober."

It hurt at first. I missed the friends of a former existence; under the novel conditions I was awkward, even eccentric; and the garments of my new state were unfamiliar and ungainly: to be quite frank, they were too tight. Nevertheless I soon learned to lead a fairly normal and, I hope, useful life along with my fellow-men, most of whom had passed through the same pangs of disembodiment. We were

each provided with a certificate testifying to our estate. Before mine goes into the salvage bundle I here set down its main provisions. It is headed: *Protection Certificate (Officer)*, and it begins by saying what it is not. It is not a security for debt. (Apparently they expected us to exceed our incomes even in the state of bliss.) Secondly, we were rendered immune, during the whole of our disembodied existence, from the contamination of Army pay. And, finally, an entry on the reverse side shows that the first step to be taken by every disembodied person was, oddly enough, to apply for a ration book.

We all have a special corner in our memory for the place in which we first stood reverently to attention before an Army Form. To this day, whenever I pass along a certain street, I have to halt outside the recruiting-office; remove my hat; form fours (we knew no better in those days) and form two deep again. It may have been because I was the first recruit that morning for the sergeant's own regiment and so enabled him to win his wager of a pint of beer; at any rate, on the occasion of this, my first, embodiment, he mixed up the entries so neatly that I have gone down in military history with the unique record:

AGE on joining	.. 5 years 8 months.
HEIGHT	.. 18½ feet.
CHEST MEASURE-	
MENT	.. Presbyterian.

And now I am wondering what is the opposite of disembodiment. In these days of *dereservation* and *undecontamination*, there is no doubt that the person wrongly attested can easily be set right. He will simply be *detested*. Can the pale host of the disembodied (up to 51) look for the status of temporary (acting) re-embodiment (on probation)?

There are many indications to mark the passage of time. The corner of the haversack once reserved for the field-marshal's baton is now occupied by a box of digestive tablets. And representative targets are no longer what they were. They are much dimmer. And too far away.

To make matters worse, these students whom I have to guide in the art of war have their own tradition of marksmanship which, unhappily, was not shared by my predecessors in the teaching of theology. We read of the archers "shooting a after noone, and amangs the rest Mr. Jhone Caldcleuch, then ane of the Maisters of Theologie, bot skarse yet a scholar in archerie." He not only missed the target, but missed also a number of "thak

housses" beyond, and hit in the neck an auld honest man who was passing by.

(Longfellow has a poem on the same kind of theme. He tells how he shot an arrow into the air and long, long afterward found it again in the heart of a friend.)

Already I have gained excellent experience. The sergeant-instructor confides in me that whenever he is puzzled by a sudden question he calls out, "You're all shivering. Round the quadrangle—Double!" And by the time his class has returned he has looked it all up in the drill-book. This is a method worth trying out in the divinity class-room.

It is hard to tell which is the more subtle discipline—disentangling the historic Christian heresies or stripping and assembling the Bren gun. On the whole, the Bren has the advantage: if it is wrong, it just obviously won't work. Yet in theory it bristles with difficulties. To the question, *What happens when the sear is depressed?* I might be able to give an effective answer if only I knew: (1) Who this sear is, and (2) What call he has to be depressed anyway.

At the Ballet

COMUS (SADLER'S WELLS)

ROBERT HELPMANN, OLIVER MESSEL and CONSTANT LAMBERT (who invoked PURCELL) have made a brilliant addition to the repertoire of the Sadler's Wells Company by their presentation of a ballet based on MILTON's *Comus*. It is Mr. HELPMANN's first essay in choreography (though his influence has been apparent in a good many former productions), and one hopes that there will be many more.

The *Attendant Spirit* of the Wood acts as Prologue in the ballet as in MILTON's *Masque*, and the entrance of *Comus* (Mr. HELPMANN) and his bizarre Rout garbed in Mr. MESSEL's brilliantly-coloured costumes is most effective (though one wondered how long these beautiful dresses would survive their "brutish" wearers' crawling about the stage in them like "groveling Swine," and where the coupons would come from to replace the richly-coloured taffetas and frail

gauzes; nor did the Rout scruple to dance upon at least one ostrich-plumed hat). MARGOT FONTEYN as the chaste lady provides a good foil to the victims of the evil potion of the son of *Circe*, with her perfect restraint and exquisitely flowing movements. Her *pas de deux* with *Comus* when, disguised as a shepherd, he entices her to his palace, was delightful, and so was her repulsion at the sight of him and his bestial Rout when she sees him in his true shape. Her brothers (JOHN HART and DAVID PALTENCHI), who rescue her with the help of the River Goddess *Sabrina* (whose Nymphs also distress one's coupon-fettered mind by crawling across the stage to represent the flowing river), are the essence of dashing gallantry.

It is hard to say which of the creators of this ballet carries off the honours, but Mr. HELPMANN proved his mastery as an interpreter of the poetry of speech as well as motion. His declamation of two passages of MILTON—*Comus'* incitement of the Rout to orgiastic revelry, and his tempting of the Lady with the Potion—is as good as his dancing.



"I have taken the precaution of making copies of these documents before parting with them for salvage."



"Now that DEFINITELY is against the regulations."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Battle Lines

MR. ALAN MOOREHEAD describes the Italian army in Libya, during General WAVELL's advance, as writing tearful endearments home in stilted literary phrases on innumerable postcards of an incredible vulgarity, and cheering its unpugnacious soul with boasts of easy victory, while its luxuriously-fed officers campaigned in gold lace, clean sheets, exotic perfumes and all the gallant furnishings of mediaeval war. Only such modern essentials as the tanks were poor, and when they failed the men surrendered without firing a shot. Meanwhile the British forces, the merest fraction of the Italian numbers, went hungry and dirty, slept little and hit hard. *Mediterranean Front* (HAMILTON, 10/6), describing as much as one man could see of half a dozen separate fields of war, is always at least good brisk narrative, and it rises to fire and passion in the tale of the furious fighting for the Cretan aerodromes, where the drug-exhilarated Germans fell out of the sky to be killed as certainly as first flakes of snow falling and thawing on warm earth, and where we won a strategic victory while learning some bitter lessons at a bitter price. Abyssinia, says Mr. MOOREHEAD, was a gentlemen's war; Syria a miserable affair of wounded pride; the withdrawal from Benghazi linked up with support of Greece. Now that the tide of

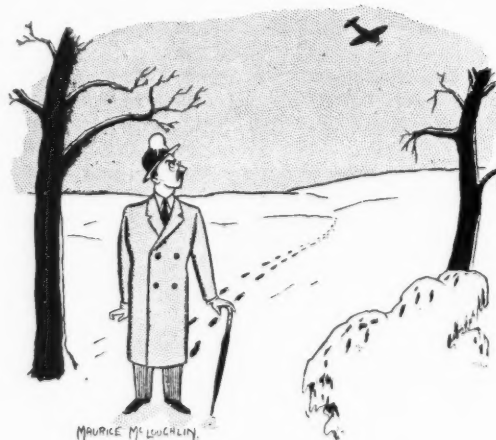
success has again washed over Libya we may well be grateful for a coherent account of the first half of the amazing story.

"Here Churchill Lives."

The inter-war space not only refused to cater for heroes, it regarded the heroic with the natural suspicion of those for whom "comfort first" had become an almost deuteronomical injunction. It was therefore no accident that saw *Winston Churchill* (HUTCHINSON, 12/6) out of office in the 'thirties; and his speeches on our "improvident stewardship" of that useful interval rank among the most eloquent of his claims to be where he is now. Moreover he has admirably practised ST. JEROME's magnificent injunction to "subsist solidly in himself," made his own mistakes and shouldered a generous allotment of other people's. All this, if one had not perceived it already, emerges in the acts and speeches of Mr. LEWIS BROAD's useful biography, which pursues, as far as the Atlantic Charter, the legend of a conscious and disinterested apprenticeship to the greatest burdens of patriotism. The weak spot in the career lies less in the more hare-brained of its personal adventures than in its occasional subservience—like those five years at the Exchequer—to departmental powers it can neither fathom nor control. If Mr. CHURCHILL is to remain leader of the peace, he should realize, one feels, that in nothing so much as a stand against the encroachments of bureaucracy will he represent the soundest instincts of his countrymen.

Magic Casements

Yet another of America's gentle scholars—CHESTER NOYES GREENOUGH—is most lovingly remembered in *An Account of His Life*, by RUTH H. GREENOUGH, which accompanies a volume of his *Collected Studies* (HARVARD CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, \$6). So little did he move outside a charmed inner circle of American University life that there is almost nothing that is crude and tangible to be told of things that he actually did. His thoughts were to him events—adventures the birth of new ideas; and though one learns that he was an effective organizer and a brilliant teacher who set a permanent impress on educational development in the United States, the biography is hardly more than a series of appreciations chronologically arranged. It is clear from his writings that he lived in a world touched with rich





CONVERSATIONS OF THE MOMENT

"WHY IS EVERYBODY MAKING SUCH A FUSS WITH THAT RATHER ORDINARY-LOOKING LITTLE PERSON?"
 "MY DEAR! SHE HAS A CELLAR."

A. Wallis Mills, January 27th, 1915

Victorian summers rather than with our own grit-slitting rough weather. His main contribution in an age of progressive thinking was a proposal to trace the emergence of modern fiction from the type of literary essay familiar as the "character" of the seventeenth century, and he is concerned to study, for instance, in phrases turned with a kind of exquisite seriousness, the possible source of the motto of the State of Massachusetts or the proportion of plagiarism in JOHN DUNTON'S *Letters From New England* of 1686. Such exercises have values on the side of sanity in the midst of a world at war.

Round the Parish

We have travelled a long way since it was the novelist's duty to interpret as well as to record; yet when the matter of a novel is contemporary village life, and this is dished up,

so to speak, in the raw, it becomes perilously indistinguishable from village gossip. You don't perhaps enjoy village gossip? You don't really care that the postman has not proposed to the housemaid at the Hall because his old mother is a stubborn fixture? It is nothing to you that the affronted girl has been making eyes at the village Lothario—still less that she has attracted the roving gaze of the vicar? Even the prospect of an illegitimate child—regarded by its progenitors as a piece of bad luck—leaves you callous? And if you are wholly unmoved by these hazards, it is cold comfort to be offered the intrigues of the W.I. and Red Cross committees, and the gradual conversion to a tentative patriotism of the young man who plays the church organ. These, however, are the staple themes of *The Time of the Singing* (CAPE, 8/6). "The war," as Mr. DAVID SCOTT DANIELL's publishers remark on the jacket, "takes its proper place in the background."

War-Effort in Wala

ALTHOUGH Wala is in West Africa it is not one of those backward bush places. It is progressive. It has a Post Office, a Junior school, a Senior school, a market with a lorry-park, several stores, a Scholars' Literary and Debating Society, and a strong force of youngmen.

A youngman is not a mere young man. He is difficult to define but easy to recognize. He may be either literate or illiterate, but it is neither the knowing neck-tie of the one nor the tufted hair-cut of the other that makes the youngman: it is the air with which these things are worn.

Much of Wala's war-effort is made by the youngmen, but they take it in their fine effortless stride. True, the Paramount Chief is the official organizer of the local Spitfire collection—and a good round sum he has collected—but it is the youngmen who keep things fizzing.

It was the literary youngmen who organized the grand boll-dance for the Spitfire Fund. Mere dances, with

native drums and untutored antics, happen in any bush village whenever there is a moon, but a boll-dance involves a lorry-load of hired bandmen from the capital with saxophones and other instruments of culture. There must also be a tarpaulin, tickets, a bar with a separate glass for each customer, bunting, and a policeman to keep out little boys. The Paramount Chief sits under an umbrella, the District Commissioner and his friends sit in armchairs. The youngmen and young ladies perform the fox-trot, the waltz and the high-life. At least once during the evening the well-known Spitfire Song is fervently sung:

"We will spit, spit, spit
In Hitler's face,
And God will help us."

Echoes of the war, academically muffled, throbbed through the Speech-day celebrations of the Senior school. They began in the Head Teacher's annual report. "The thanks of the school," the teacher said, "are due to Mr. Jones who gave us a generous gift

of two cricket-bats, to Mrs. Jones who gave us materials for our dispensary, to Almighty God who has watched over the school and preserved our land from the dangers of war, and to Mr. Wilkinson who gave us a new football."

But the high spot of the Speech-day was reached when Wilberforce Ebenezer Kwabla, the star of Standard VII and a budding youngman, gave a stirring rendering of "Now All the Youth of England," and proved Standard VII able to shake a spear with the best.

On the outskirts of the Speech-day assembly was Brima Moshi, a police constable. He came, presumably, to keep visitors from manifesting their excitement too wildly. After the performance he asked Kwabla what that loud speech of his was all about. As Brima comes from a distant province and is not a scholar, he can converse with Wala people only in pidgin, but Kwabla is a scholar who can talk down to anyone—and he did.

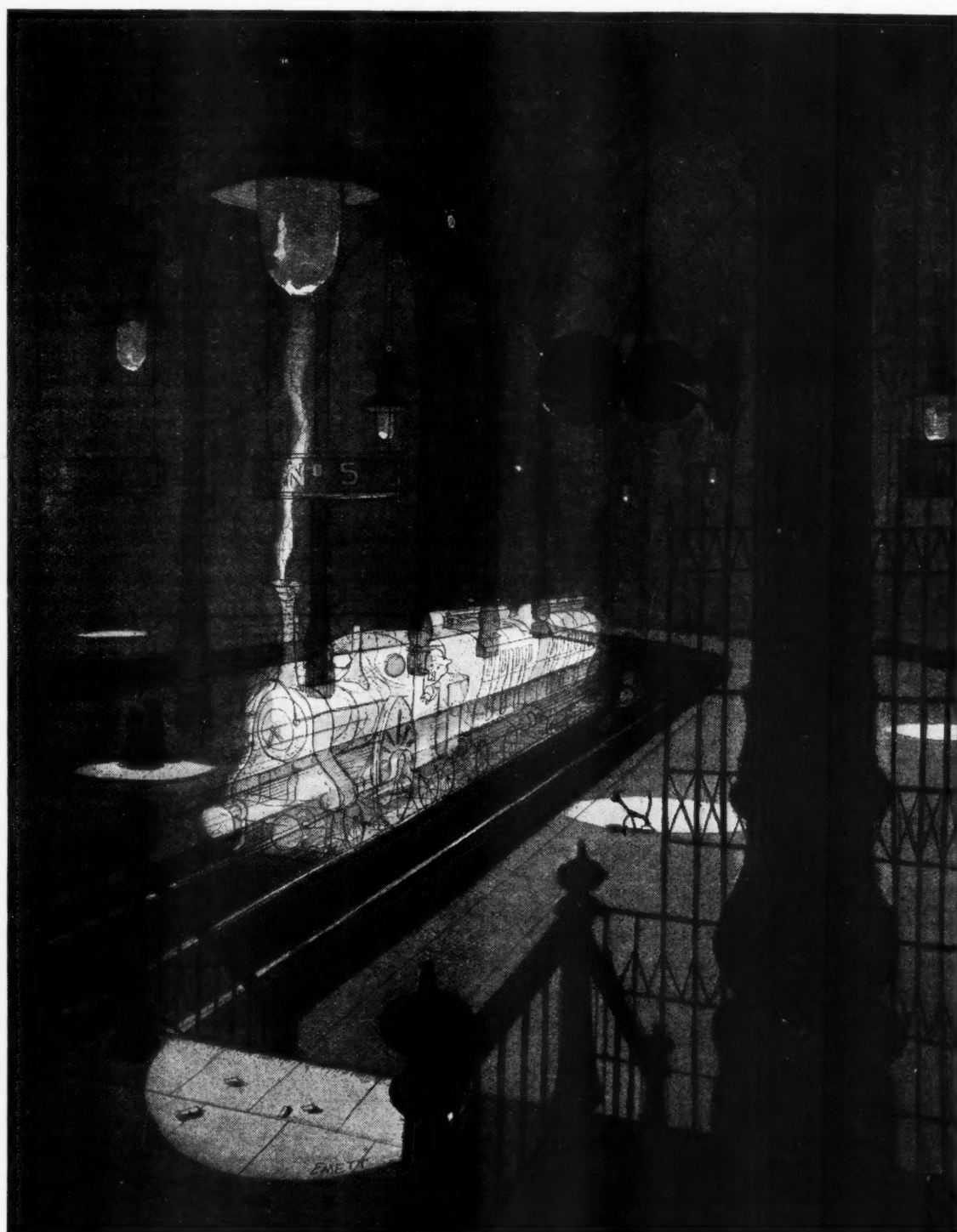
"Now all Ingleshi youngman eye make red.
Him Sunday trouser sleep for box-inside,
And plenty money come for blacksmith hand.
Man t'ink, t'ink, t'ink for make t'ing proper-good.
Man sell him farm for makum fit buy horse.
Big chief, he good pass all, man walk him back
Like whiteman juju, fowl-wing live for foot.
Man put him face for look to-morrow-next:
He never t'ink how cutlass be; he t'ink
How plenty big-chief hat and small-chief hat
Go sit for marsa head and soldier head . . ."

In Wala no well-disposed youngman, however dashing, would become a soldier unless his family elders approved. The people to set on fire about recruiting are therefore the greybeards. So the Paramount Chief called a meeting of his sub-chiefs and all their elders to find out how many recruits they were willing to contribute.

This meeting was fixed for 8 A.M. and began at 4 P.M. Even so, Chief Bofi of Bonchi, who is not progressive, was late. He said afterwards that he had no clock, no money to buy one, and



"Two coupons if you want it for a scarf—and seven if it's for a sarong."



"The train standing at No. 5 platform is the midnight slow for Spectral Manor, Gallows Hill, Grisly Grange and Hangdog Heath."

not sufficient scholarship to read it if he had it. The Paramount Chief snorted.

"Are there no clocks in the stores of Wala? Is there not one scholar in Bofi who can read a clock? You are fined one sheep and two bottles of rum. Ask some scholar to add up the prices of them and tell you whether it would have been cheaper to buy a clock. Then go and buy a clock. Buy the kind of clock that lifts up its voice and cries loudly to wake snorers out of their sleep."

The Court applauded. The Paramount Chief concluded: "When any sub-chief of mine is called to a recruiting meeting he shall not be late, even if he has to tax his people to buy a clock. We cannot allow this war to wait while bush chiefs sleep without clocks. Have you heard?"

"Grandfather, I have heard," said Chief Bofi.

At the recruiting meeting the chiefs agreed to send generous numbers of recruits. These duly presented themselves for registration but were disappointed to learn that they could not immediately be called up, and must go home and wait.

Waiting is apt to be a bad business, but the youngmen were undaunted. They held several meetings to discuss the worthiest way of using the interval and decided to found a fife-and-drum band.

Four representatives were sent by lorry to the capital. Three were to buy fifes and study European band-music. The fourth had a brother-in-law in the Police band and was to persuade him to put the music students in the way of playing their fifes.

They spent a useful fortnight in the capital. In addition to the private coaching from the brother-in-law they had some long sessions under the police-barracks hedge, listening avidly while the band within did its daily practice. They returned to Wala with a creditable number of tunes in their heads and the faith that diligent practice would soon reproduce these tunes on the fifes.

Some weeks later a European spending a night in the Wala rest-house was visited by the youngmen's band. The bandmaster explained that the players were in the difficulty of having forgotten one of their European tunes. They would like some help in recalling it. The tune was called "The Old Lamb Sighing."

"I can't place the words," said the European, "but play me what you remember of the tune."

The fifes began their striving cries.

"Yes, yes. Of course. 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

"Yes, Sir. Please, Sir, will you sing it to us, Sir? If we can learn to sing it correctly the players will perfect themselves later."

The European disclaimed knowledge of the words, which, he said, were in the outlandish tongue of the tribes of the Northern Territories of Great Britain. But he consented to do his best with the tune to the words "La, la, la."

So, standing on the verandah steps, he realized, all too late in life, the two long-abandoned dreams of wielding a conductor's baton and singing to an entirely appreciative audience.

When the audience itself began tentatively to sing and the strains

reached the town, a crowd of little boys and girls came and joined. Then the postmaster came with his accordion and the sanitary inspector with his mandolin. All sorts of people came.

The little girls proved quickest at seizing the tune, the little boys were next, the accordion was a good third. Soon the youngmen themselves were in full cry and drowned the struggles of the fifes. The drums held their own from the start.

When the teacher was exhausted he declared the pupils perfect. His hand was seized and wrung by every youngman in turn.

"Never before," beamed the bandmaster, "has such music been heard at Wala. But I do not understand why a tune of such military gladness has been composed about an old lamb sighing."

East or West?

EAST is East and West is West,
Or so Mr. Kipling thought,
But the whole question
Of what is which

Is with confusion fraught;

For somewhere in the Pacific Ocean

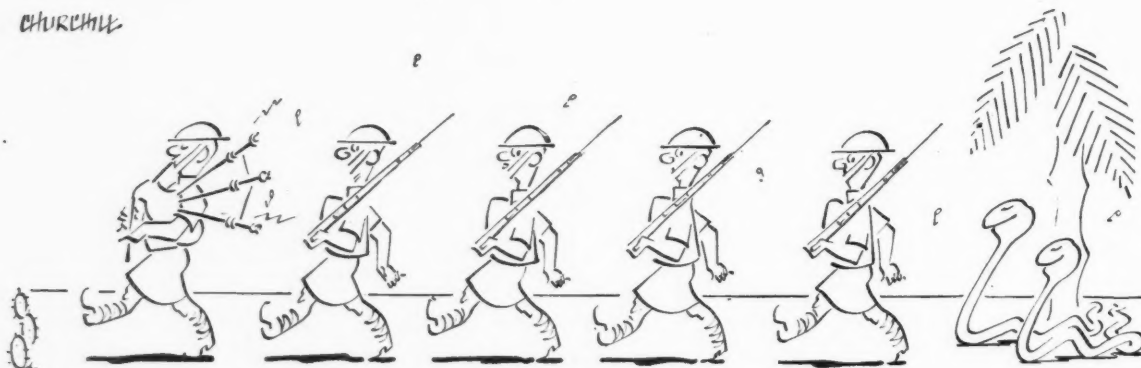
West must meet with East,
Though where I haven't a notion,
And I don't suppose you know
In the least;

As for the Bering Sea,

I'm completely bemused about it,
And though you may know
If it's East or West,

I very greatly doubt it. A. W. B.

CHURCHILL



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